

REMARKS

Claims 7, 9-12, 14 and 16 are pending in the subject application. In the outstanding Office Action, claims 7 and 9-15 stand rejected. By way of the above amendments, claims 7 and 14 have been amended, claims 13 and 15 have been canceled, and new claim 16 has been added. Support for the claim amendments and the addition of the new claim can be found throughout the specification (specific sections noted below). Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of all of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 7, 9-11, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph due to certain language in claims 7, 14 and 15.

With regard to the indefiniteness rejection of claim 7, the Examiner asserts that the specification, while being enabling for polymer components being segregated and independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly, does not provide enablement for such segregating and independently maintaining polymer streams at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly. Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion, since it should be clear from the disclosure in the specification, when considered in its entirety, that the polymer components flow in molten polymer streams that are segregated from each other. However, in an effort to advance prosecution of this application, claim 7 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner to include the recitation of "*differing polymer components are segregated and are independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly*". Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection of claims 7 and 9-11 should now be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph, the Examiner asserts that, while being enabling for the recitation of the pump blocks being configured to limit heat transfer to polymer components, the specification does not provide enablement for the spin beam assembly to be so configured. Applicants also respectfully disagree with this assertion, since the pump blocks are clearly an element or portion of the spin beam assembly (i.e., the spin beam assembly includes pump blocks disposed therein), so the spin beam assembly is in fact

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configured to provide the recited feature by the fact that the pump blocks are a part of the spin beam assembly.

However, in an effort to advance prosecution of this application, claim 14 has been amended to recite that the delivery of a plurality of polymer streams from the spin beam assembly to spinneret orifices further includes providing a plurality of pump blocks within the spin beam assembly and a plurality of pumps disposed on the pump blocks, where the pump blocks are configured to limit heat transfer from each pump block to polymer components flowing within each pump block. The specification clearly supports the features of claim 14 (see, e.g., page 9, lines 2-11 and further Fig. 3 of the application). Accordingly, this rejection of claim 14 should be withdrawn.

Claims 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, since these claims recite "*the differing polymer components are segregated*" while claim 7 recites "*the polymer streams including differing polymer components are segregated*". This rejection should now be withdrawn based upon the amendment to claim 7 as noted above in response to rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

Claims 7 and 9-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,814,349 to Gues et al. ("Gues") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,103,181 to Berger and U.S. Patent No. 3,659,989 to Uraya, Jr. ("Uraya"). In addition, claims 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gues in view of Berger and Uraya, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,648,826 to Ogasawara et al. ("Ogasawara"); claims 7 and 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gues in view of Berger and JP 61-296110; claims 7, 9-12, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gues in view of Berger and DD 63116. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of the claims based upon the following remarks.

Claim 7 has been amended to include the manifold sections as recited in canceled claim 13 as well as additional features describing such manifold sections. In particular, claim 7 has been amended to include the feature of delivering a plurality of polymer streams from the spin beam assembly to spinneret orifices, wherein at least two of the polymer streams include

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differing polymer components, and the differing polymer components are segregated and are independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly by providing a plurality of manifold sections within the spin beam assembly, each manifold section being configured to receive a respective polymer component in a plurality of piping sections extending within the manifold section and a heat transfer medium that flows within the manifold section and around the piping sections extending through the manifold section so as to maintain the respective polymer component at a selected temperature. These features are clearly supported by the specification (see, e.g., page 7, line 23 to page 8, line 22, page 11, lines 27-29, and Fig. 3 of the application). None of the cited references discloses or renders obvious the combined features of claim 7.

While Geus and Berger teach methods of extruding fibers and forming spun-bond webs of fibers, neither of these references discloses or suggests the feature of segregating differing polymer components and independently maintaining such segregated polymer components at different temperatures in the spin beam assembly as recited in claim 7. In fact, Geus fails to even disclose or suggest the feature of forming polymer streams including differing polymer components.

Further, none of the other cited references teaches providing manifold sections as recited in claim 7.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 13 based upon a combination of Geus with Berger and Uraya. Uraya teaches the use of a filter block II including reservoirs 2 and 2' (see Fig. 2 of Uraya), which the Examiner construes as manifold sections as recited in claim 13. The reservoir 2 and 2' of Uraya receive two molten polymer streams from tubes 3 and 3' in a feeding block I disposed above the filter block. Electric heaters 11 and 11' are disposed along the feeding block I, filter block II, breaker plate III and nozzle plate IV of Uraya to independently heat the two polymer streams. Uraya further describes that heating can be achieved by jackets for circulating heat medium in addition to the electric heaters (see Col. 6, lines 67-72 of Uraya).

However, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Uraya of providing a plurality of

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manifold sections as recited in amended claim 7, where each manifold section is configured to receive a respective polymer component in a plurality of piping sections extending within the manifold section and a heat transfer medium that flows within the manifold section and around the piping sections extending through the manifold section so as to maintain the respective polymer component at a selected temperature.

Even assuming one could construe the reservoirs 2 and 2' of filter block II of Uraya as manifold sections, there is no disclosure in Uraya that the filter block or each of the reservoirs includes a plurality of piping sections extending within the block. Further, Uraya fails to disclose that a heating medium flows within each filter block of Uraya in addition to the polymer stream received from tube 3 or 3'. At best, Uraya discloses that a heating medium can be used in addition to the electric heater, without any further disclosure as to how the heating medium jacket would be configured or installed with respect to the various blocks and plates I, II, III and IV.

The other cited references also fail to describe any component or element that could reasonably be construed as the recited manifold sections of claim 7. The Examiner appears to have already acknowledged this, since claim 13 was only rejected based upon a combination of Gues, Berger and Uraya. Accordingly, claim 7 should be allowed over any combination of Gues, Berger, Uraya, Ogasawara, JP 61-296110 and/or DD 63116. The Examiner is therefore requested to withdraw the rejections of claim 7 based upon the various combinations of these references and to allow this claim.

Claims 9-12 and 14 depend from claim 7 and therefore include all of the limitations of their parent claim. Accordingly, these claims should also be allowed over any combination of Gues, Berger, Uraya, Ogasawara, JP 61-296110 and/or DD 63116, and the Examiner is requested to withdraw the rejections of these claims based upon the various combinations of these references.

New claim 16 depends from claim 7 and should therefore also be allowed based upon the previous remarks for claim 7. Claim 16 recites the additional feature that the delivery of a plurality of polymer streams from the spin beam assembly to spinneret orifices further includes

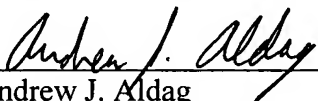
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providing a plurality of pump blocks within the spin beam assembly and a plurality of pumps disposed on the pump blocks, where the pump blocks are disposed such that each pump block is adjacent at least one other pump block, and the pump blocks are configured to limit heat transfer between adjacent pump blocks. Support for the limitations of this claim are clearly provided in the specification (see, e.g., page 8, line 23, to page 9, line 21, and Fig. 3 of the application). No combination of the cited references anticipates or renders obvious the combined features of claim 16.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 7, 9-12, 14 and 16. However, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Submitted herewith is a petition for a two month extension of time with the requisite fees. Applicants hereby petition for any additional extension of time that may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Respectfully submitted,



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